



Regulations Summary for Cook Islands Licensed Pelagic Longline Vessels

May 2014

This guide summarizes regulations applicable to pelagic longline vessels with a Cook Islands Government license to fish. This guide does not summarize licensing, renewal or transfer requirements. The guide summarizes the following regulations:

- Marine Resources (Licensing) Regulations 2012
- Marine Resources (Large Pelagic Longline Fishery) Regulations 2012
- Marine Resources (Shark Conservation) Regulations 2012

Reporting, Monitoring and Gear Identification

- Record ALL caught fish (including sharks and rays) and non-fish (including turtles, whales, dolphins, birds) species, both retained and discarded, on your logbook form.
- Maintain a transshipment logbook – transshipment is permitted if you possess a permit from the Minister of Marine Resources
- Possess on board either a current Foreign Fishing Licence or High Seas Authorisation.
- Possess an operational, Forum Fisheries Agency-approved Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) unit on board.
- Display unique identification number (international radio call sign (IRCS) or other assigned official number) assigned to the vessel by the Cook Islands government on the hull port and starboard sides, and on the deck. Locate the ID number so that it is never obstructed from view. Display the ID in block lettering and numbering.
- For vessels 25m and longer, letters and numbers on hull must be at least 1m tall, vessels 20 to 25m long, minimum 0.8 m tall, vessels 15to 20m long, minimum 0.6m tall. Number on deck must be at least 0.3m tall.
- Label fishing gear with vessel's government assigned ID number.
- Comply with all reporting requirements of your fishing licence and Special Conditions attachment.

Notification of Departure and Observer Placement

- Notify the Cook Islands Ministry of Marine Resources Observer Co-ordinator (Saiasi Sarau) at least 72 hours before departure either via phone (+682 28721) or email (s.sarau@mmr.gov.ck).
- Arrange for an on board observer for a fishing trip, if the Cook Islands Government Observer Co-ordinator notifies you that an on board observer will be placed on your vessel for that trip. The Coordinator will provide you with at least 24 hours advanced notice.

Sea Turtle, Seabird, and Sharks Handling and Bycatch Mitigation

- Captains must attend a Cook Islands Government protected species workshop, when instructed.
- Possess on board all MMR-required equipment for handling and releasing sea turtles, sharks, rays, whales, dolphins, and seabirds, including: long-handled dipnet, bolt cutter, long-handled line cutter, long-handled dehooker.

- Possess on board MMR-provided handling and release guides for sea turtles, sharks and rays, whales and dolphins, and seabirds.
- If a seabird, sea turtle, shark, ray, whale or dolphin is caught alive, employ best practice handling and release methods described in the MMR-provided guides.
- Minimize the amount of offal (from processing fish at sea) and spent bait that you discard at sea.
- No wire leaders (the part of the branchline immediately next to the hook) on branchlines.
- No adding substances (e.g., chum, spent bait, offal) to the water to attract sharks.
- No targeting the catch of sharks or rays.
- No retention of sharks, rays or skates, including shark fins.
- If you are fishing North of 30°S, then you are encouraged to employ one or more of the following seabird bycatch mitigation methods: weighted branch lines, night setting, tori lines, set the mainline from the side of the vessel plus use a bird curtain and weights on branchlines, blue-dyed and completely thawed bait, mainline shooter, manage the discharge of offal (either don't discharge offal during setting or hauling or otherwise discharge offal from the opposite side of the boat from where you are setting or hauling).
- If you are fishing South of 30°S, then you are required to use at least two of these three seabird bycatch mitigation methods: weighted branch lines, night setting, tori lines.
- If you are targeting swordfish and fishing shallow with hooks soaking shallower than 100m, then use at least one of these two turtle bycatch mitigation measures: only wide circle hooks, only whole finfish for bait (no squid for bait).
- Release unharmed, as possible, all live catch of species and sizes that you will not retain.

Prohibited Fishing Areas

- No vessel 20 metres or more in length may fish within 12 nautical miles of any Island of the Cook Islands
- No vessel 20 metres or more in length may fish within 24 nautical miles of Rarotonga